



COMMONWEALTH of VIRGINIA

DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES

For Immediate Release

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Virginia Celebrates National Adoption Day, Nov. 18, 2006 **- 894 Foster Children Awaiting Adoption in Virginia -**

Richmond (Nov. 15, 2006) – For the children in Virginia without a permanent place to call home, Nov. 18 is a day of promise and hope.

“Currently, there are 894 foster children in Virginia who are awaiting adoption placement with a loving, stable family,” said Virginia Department of Social Services (VDSS) Commissioner Anthony Conyers Jr. “We have a real need for families and individuals to consider adopting older children and siblings. Two-thirds of our foster care children are six years of age or older. Any individual or family interested in adoption should call their local department of social services or 1-800-DO-ADOPT.”

Governor Timothy M. Kaine has proclaimed November as [Adoption Awareness Month](#). VDSS, local departments of social services and organizations statewide are sponsoring events to highlight the need for safe, loving and permanent homes for children, as well as the process of adoption.

Nov. 18, National Adoption Day, celebrates the finalization of adoptive placements through the Circuit Court. Judges, social workers, attorneys and families attend the festivities which are usually open to the public. Those considering adoption can get a glimpse of the joy that providing a permanent home can bring. Interested persons can also connect with agencies that provide the training and preparation to become a potential adoptive family.

Initiatives such as *Virginia's Heart Gallery* have been very successful in focusing public attention on the need for permanent placement. Professional and amateur photographers donate their services for portraits designed to capture the personality of a foster child. Norfolk Human Services is hosting Heart Gallery II, Nov. 30 – Jan. 11, 2007 at Selden Arcade in Norfolk, Va. Last year, the Heart Gallery featured portraits of 61 foster children; 23 were placed in permanent homes.

The Adoption Awareness Month theme for 2006 is, “Imagine a Family for Every Child. Imagine that Family is You.” The following events are scheduled throughout the Commonwealth and open to the public:

- **Nov. 16**
Chesapeake- “The World of Adoption”
Chesapeake Central Library
7-8:30 p.m.
298 Cedar Road
Adoption Seminar, Shore Adoptions, Inc.
Contact: Sheryl Shonyo at 757-382-6591
- **Nov. 18**
Hampton Roads- Foster and Adoptive Family Foundation
Virginia Air and Space Center
600 Settlers Landing Road
10 a.m. - 5 p.m.
Contact: Faye Howe at 757-423-5342
- **Nov. 18-**
Salem/Roanoke- Adoption finalization celebration
Andrew Lewis Middle School
616 South College Ave.
10:30 a.m. – 1 p.m.
City of Salem, Roanoke City, Roanoke County Departments of Social Services;
Commonwealth Catholic Charities, Inc. and Depaul Family Services, Inc.
Contact: Dawn Espelage at 540-387-5684
- **Nov. 18**
Virginia Beach- Skating Adoption Party
Haygood Skating Rink
1036 Ferry Plantation Road
10 a.m. - 12 p.m.
United Methodist Family Services of Tidewater, Wendy’s Wonderful Kids
Contact: Sarah Fields at 757-490-9791, ext. 113
- **Nov. 30**
Charlottesville- Community Training for Pre-Adoptive and Adoptive Families
“Developmental Issues in Adoption”
Albemarle County Office Building
1600 5th St.
6 – 8:30 p.m.
Albemarle County, Charlottesville and Greene County Departments of Social Services
Contact: Amy Nash at 434-970-3329

- **Nov. 30 – Jan. 11, 2007**
Norfolk- Heart Gallery II
Selden Arcade
208 E. Main St.
Norfolk Human Services
Contact: Jan Callaghan at 757-664-6020

Virginia's adoption hotline is 1-800-DO-ADOPT (1-800-362-3678). For more information on adoptions or other events planned in Virginia, please contact Sondra Draper at (804) 726-7524 or Linda Searcy at (804) 726-7584.

The Virginia Department of Social Services (www.dss.virginia.gov) Home Office is located in Richmond and administers social services programs consistent with Federal and State law and policy of the State Board of Social Services through 120 local departments of social services (LDSS) throughout the state. The VDSS mission is "People helping people triumph over poverty, abuse and neglect to shape strong futures for themselves, their families and communities."

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